

Continuity and *Res Novae* in the Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate**

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Although Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (*CV*) has largely been viewed as treating globalization, this article shows that *CV* is much more than a globalization encyclical. First, it focuses on the continuities in the social doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church with regard to the anthropological and theological preconditions of globalization. Second, with regard to the economic, social, and political aspects of these preconditions, this article highlights the new things that find special emphasis in *CV*. While there are significant continuities with globalization as treated in *CV* and preceding social teaching, *CV* is the encyclical that demonstrates that the decisive battle for a human society is not made in the field of economics but in the field of bioethics. It is the encyclical that integrates bioethics into the social doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

Caritas in Veritate (*CV*) was announced as a globalization encyclical. For a year and a half, it was expected as a globalization encyclical, and on July 7, 2009, it was presented to the public as a globalization encyclical. The day of the publication, one day before the beginning of the G8 Summit, also increased the impression that the encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI focuses on globalization. That impression is not wrong, but it is just half of the truth. As will be shown in the last part of this article, *CV* is much more than a globalization encyclical. It is the encyclical that demonstrates the decisive battle for human society is not made in the field of economics but in the field of bioethics. It is the encyclical that integrates bioethics into the social doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. First, this article will examine what the encyclical says about globalization, which already has been a subject of the *Compendium* and of the social encyclicals written by Pope

John Paul II, especially of *Centesimus Annus* (1991) and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), and not least of the documents written by Pope Paul VI—his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967) and his apostolic letter *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971). The fortieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio* (*PP*) was the occasion to publish *Caritas in Veritate*. How will the rich heritage of the Church's social doctrine be developed concerning the problem of globalization and how will it receive new accents? I will try to answer that question in two steps: first, with regard to the anthropological and theological preconditions of globalization; and, second, with regard to their economic, social, and political aspects.

The Anthropological and Theological Preconditions of Globalization

In social-ethical literature, you can find extreme differences in evaluating globalization at the end of the nineties. Whereas, on the one hand, it is condemned to be a new tower of Babel; on the other hand, it is praised to be the new Pentecost that would give a new unity and a new prosperity to humankind.¹ *Caritas in Veritate* is, in contrast to that, more rational; together with the *Compendium* and Pope John Paul II, the encyclical states that globalization is neither good nor bad in itself but depends on how it is used (*CV*, 42; *Compendium*, 310). Globalization gives rise to new hopes while at the same time it poses troubling questions (*Compendium*, 362).² Benedict does not remain in a position of indifferent equidistance relative to the chances and risks of globalization. Rather, in an impressive and convincing manner, he invites Christians to participate in the design of globalization, and, for that invitation, he does not give political or social-ethical reasons but rather anthropological and theological ones with genuinely new accents. He writes, “The idea of a world without development indicates a lack of trust in man and in God” (*CV*, 14). Man has a vocation for development (*CV*, 16): “The human person by nature is actively involved in his own development. The development in question is not simply the result of natural mechanisms, because as everybody knows, we are all capable of making free and responsible choices” (*CV*, 68). Besides, it is “a serious mistake to undervalue human capacity to exercise control over the deviations of development or to overlook the fact that man is constitutionally oriented towards being more” (*CV*, 14).

Benedict XVI takes up a statement given by Pope Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* that sometimes provokes irritations even among Christians: “Each one remains, whatever be these influences affecting him, the principal agent of his own success or failure” (*CV*, 17; *PP*, 15). That statement leads to irritation because even Christians sometimes tend to consider themselves victims of systems

or structures of sin. That there really are such structures of sin, in industrial just as in developing countries, that is, in rich just as in poor countries, is confirmed in *CV* without any doubt (*CV*, 22). Africa especially gives many examples of internal and external hindrances for development, which also were dealt with at the African Synod in 2009. Pope Paul VI himself saw the hindrances and conditions that can obstruct development in human dignity. However, regardless of all hindrances, conditions, and influences, the social doctrine of the Church articulated by Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI keeps to the subjective character of a person who “endowed with intelligence and freedom” is as responsible for his fulfilment as he is for his salvation (*PP*, 15), and who has a vocation to development and remains the cause of his success or failure. “All this ... is based on the vision of man as a person, that is to say, as an active and responsible subject of his own growth process, together with the community to which he belongs” (*Compendium*, 133). Therefore, the person has not only a vocation for development but also a duty. That is not only valid for persons but also for peoples who “themselves have the prime responsibility to work for their own development” (*PP*, 77; *CV*, 47).

The subject of development is not the high-handed person of the Enlightenment, the Prometheus, praised by Karl Marx as the “noblest Saint and Martyr in the philosophic calendar.”³ The subject of development is the person who gives himself as a gift. Sometimes, as Benedict writes, the modern human is “wrongly convinced that he is the sole author of himself, his life, and society. This is a presumption that follows from being selfishly closed in upon himself, and it is a consequence—to express it in faith terms—of original sin” (*CV*, 34). We are not “self-generated.... In the face of such a Promethean presumption, we must fortify our love for a freedom that is not merely arbitrary, but is rendered truly human by the acknowledgement of the good that underlies it” (*CV*, 68). “The human being is made for giving” (*CV*, 34) and is “always capable of giving something to others” (*CV*, 57). It is that anthropology on which the principle of gratuity so emphasized in *CV* is based—the relevancy of which Benedict XVI also tries to elucidate for economic and social conditions. With the help of that principle of gratuity, Benedict XVI does not want to declare null and void for economic and social relations the central principles of *iustitia commutativa*, *iustitia distributiva*, and *iustitia socialis*, but he wants to point out that we need more than justice for human development. This “more” means trust, appreciation, compassion, and love. Charity in truth (*caritas in veritate*) is the key to the complete development of the person and of all persons, and so also the key for a globalization of human dignity. To love “is to give, to offer what is ‘mine’ to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is ‘his,’

what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting” (*CV*, 6). In the school of thought adapted by Benedict XVI, gratuitousness does not mean “one-sided love and care without service in return but a personal relationship which causes to rise from my voluntary action a reciprocity in the form of friendship.”⁴ By emphasizing the principle of gratuitousness Benedict XVI takes up a principle that is discernible several times in the *Compendium* (47, 193, 196, 390, 583) and that is woven like a red thread through the pontificate of John Paul II. George Weigel has worked out that thread very well in his great biography of John Paul II.⁵ Not self-realization but self-devotion is the key to a successful human life—the self-devotion John Paul II himself has personified by his life during his whole pontificate, the self-devotion that is based on the incarnation of Jesus and on his death on the cross and about which the Second Vatican Council says in *Gaudium et Spes* (*GS*) that only by this can the person entirely find himself (*GS*, 24). Benedict XVI dedicates his first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (*DCE*) from December 25, 2005, to that principal truth of faith that finds another visual expression in the footwashing of the disciples by Jesus during the Last Supper.

The result from these anthropological and theological preconditions for the comprehension of globalization is that a development in human dignity must comprise the integral person and all persons.⁶ The essential characteristic of a “real development,” Benedict XVI writes while following here the *Compendium* and Paul VI, consists in being complete and taking the complete person and all humanity into consideration (*CV*, 18; *PP*, 14; *Compendium*, 82, 373, 446). “The truth of development consists in his completeness: if it does not involve the whole man and every man, it is not true development” (*CV*, 18). A development taking the complete man into consideration means for Benedict XVI and for his predecessors that it shall not only contain the removal of hunger, material poverty, endemic diseases, the offer of possibilities of education, and work but that it is also open for “a transcendent vision of the person” and so for God (*CV*, 11). Paul VI refers to the “integral humanism” of Jacques Maritain,⁷ a humanism that gives man the opportunity to go beyond himself, in contrast to self-reserved and, because of that, inhuman humanism (*PP*, 42). Benedict XVI takes up that thesis in his final appeal in *CV*: “Only a humanism open to the Absolute” can lead us in realizing human development (*CV*, 78). He reminds us of the “great truth” Paul VI has told the world by the council that the Church itself promotes the complete development of people when it preaches the gospel, celebrates the Eucharist, and works in love (*CV*, 11). “Life in Christ is the first and principal factor of development” (*CV*, 8), as the Second African Synod has also underlined in its final message to God’s people (Number 15).⁸

Finally, a development that is an advantage to all peoples means for Benedict XVI and for Paul VI “from the economic point of view their active participation, on equal terms, in the international economic process; from the social point of view ... their evolution into educated societies marked by solidarity; from the political point of view ... consolidation of democratic regimes” (*CV*, 21). However, two times Benedict XVI warns of an overestimation of institutions and structures:

In the course of history, it was often maintained that the creation of institutions was sufficient to guarantee the fulfilment of humanity’s right to development. Unfortunately, too much confidence was placed in those institutions, as if they were able to deliver the desired objective automatically. In reality, institutions by themselves are not enough, because integral human development is primarily a vocation, and therefore it involves a free assumption of responsibility in solidarity on the part of everyone. (*CV*, 11)

The second warning can be found a few paragraphs later: “Integral human development presupposes the responsible freedom of the individual and of peoples: no structure can guarantee this development over and above human responsibility” (*CV*, 17). In my opinion, these admonitions are not only directed against ideologies of development that expect progress on the part of certain institutions and structures but also against the spread of a trend in the ethics of economics that is planned only as an ethic of ordering and that presupposes that the correct ordering, by which it means correct structures and institutions, would automatically enforce the correct behavior.

Economic, Political, and Social Aspects of Globalization

Benedict XVI begins his discussions about globalization and its economic, political, and social aspects with a statement full of optimism and confidence: “It is true that growth has taken place, and it continues to be a positive factor that has lifted billions of people out of misery—recently it has given many countries the possibility of becoming effective players in international politics” (*CV*, 21). The enumeration of dramatic problems burdening globalization follows immediately, but, despite this, the encyclical never loses its view for the prospects and positive results of globalization. Thus globalization has affected “the emergence from underdevelopment of whole regions” (*CV*, 33). Another result is “the unprecedented possibility of large-scale redistribution of wealth on a world-wide scale” (*CV*, 42). Such a positive estimation, not only of the chances but also of the results of globalization, cannot be found in the *Compendium*,

which nevertheless must be praised as a successful and very helpful means or handbook of the social doctrine of the Church. However, pointing out the positive factors of globalization never blocks the view of Benedict XVI with regard to its diverse problems.

Economic Aspects

The economic globalization of the world has become much more intense compared to the time of Paul VI—not only with respect to the globalization of commerce but also to that of production and the financial market. The result is, according to Benedict, not only a great increase of the worldwide wealth but also new inequalities between countries and within countries and at the same time a limitation of competence in political regulation in every single state (*CV*, 22). Economic globalization still is far away from the integration of the developing countries into the world market under equal conditions. A discriminating shield of industrial countries against developing countries, disastrous speculations on the global financial market, the exploitation of the natural resources on earth, uncontrolled migratory streams, and new forms of colonialism and dependence from new and old hegemonic countries characterized the worldwide financial and economic crisis in 2008–2009 (*CV*, 22).

In order to resolve or at least diminish the problems, Benedict XVI reminds us of a central principle of the Church's social doctrine:

The Church's social doctrine has always maintained that justice must be applied to every phase of economic activity.... Locating resources, financing, production, consumption and all the other phases in the economic cycle inevitably have moral implications.... Economic life undoubtedly requires contracts, in order to regulate relations of exchange between goods of equivalent value. But it also needs just laws and forms of redistribution governed by politics, and what is more, it needs works redolent of the spirit of gift. (*CV*, 37)

For a correct, working economy we need ethics (*CV*, 45), which Benedict underlined again in his speech in front of British political and societal representatives at Westminster Hall on September 17, 2010. Benedict XVI offers a somewhat ambivalent response from that principle with regard to the trend of giving ethical certifications to banks and investment funds, a trend that arose in recent years in many industrial countries. On the one hand, he praises that movement. It deserves “much support,” because their positive effects “also can be felt in the less developed areas of the world” (*CV*, 45). On the other hand, he warns that “the entire economy and finance” and not just “certain sectors” must be formed according to ethical criteria (*CV*, 65) and that “the canons of justice

must be respected from the outset, as the economic process unfolds, and not just afterwards or incidentally” (*CV*, 37).

With regard to the financial market, whose crisis, caused by the American mortgage bubble and the issue policy of the Federal Reserve System, formed the beginning of the worldwide economic crisis in 2008–2009, Benedict XVI demands, on the one hand, a renovation of the structures with the objective being to clarify the instrumental character of the financial market for the real economy and, on the other hand, a reform of the investment banker’s attitudes: “Financiers must rediscover the genuinely ethical foundation of their activity, so as not to abuse the sophisticated instruments which can serve to betray the interests of savers” (*CV*, 65). In its description of the critical development of the global financial market, the *Compendium* has been more precise than *CV* and—considering the year of publication (2004)—more prophetic:

The financial sector, which has seen the volume of financial transactions far surpass that of real transactions, runs the risk of developing according to a mentality that has only itself as a point of reference, without being connected to the real foundations of the economy. A financial economy that is an end unto itself is destined to contradict its goals, since it is no longer in touch with its roots and has lost sight of its constitutive purpose. In other words, it has abandoned its original and essential role of serving the real economy and, ultimately, of contributing to the development of people and the human community. (*Compendium*, 368–69)

In order to resolve or at least to diminish the economic problems of globalization Benedict XVI also demands a deep change in understanding and interpreting a “company.” He adopts the stakeholder principle according to which “business management cannot concern itself only with the interests of the proprietors, but must also assume responsibility for all the other stakeholders who contribute to the life of the business: the workers, the clients, the suppliers of various elements of production, the community of reference” (*CV*, 40). He concedes a role in implementing the principle of economic gratuitousness to the profit-orientated private companies, to national companies, and to mixed forms of companies. The entrepreneurial, mixed forms that seem to be inspired by the idea of the economy of community of the Focolare movement,⁹ shall “without rejecting profit, aim at a higher goal than the mere logic of the exchange of equivalents, of profit as an end in itself” (*CV*, 38–39). Together with the tradition of Catholic social doctrine, Benedict XVI demands the codetermination of workers in the company (*CV*, 41); the access to drinking-water for all (*CV*, 27); the protection of the environment, its resources, and climate (*CV*, 50); and the examination of

the lifestyle in the rich countries (*CV*, 51). The thinking of the universal destination of goods (*Centesimus Annus*, 30; *Compendium*, 176) so emphasized by John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus* (*CA*) and also by the *Compendium*, remains a little underexposed in *CV*.

It is the market economy that still is of central importance for any economic development and so also for economic globalization, to which Benedict XVI (like the *Compendium* and John Paul II) dedicates fundamental statements. The positive appreciations of market and competition in the Church's social doctrine are still very new. These are the *res novae* of *Centesimus Annus* (43, 40), which are taken up in the *Compendium* (347 and 348). Indeed, Benedict states that "the market does not exist in the pure state" and that it receives its form rather by "cultural configurations" (*CV*, 36). The market depends on preconditions it cannot create by itself. That corresponds exactly to the concepts made by the fathers of social market economy who reformed the economic system in Germany after World War II on the basis of a Christian spirit and in a basic and successful manner. Benedict XVI praises the function of the market as being very positive just as John Paul II did: "The market is not, and must not become, the place where the strong subdue the weak. Society does not have to protect itself from the market, as if the development of the latter were *ipso facto* to entail the death of authentically human relations" (*CV*, 36). Furthermore, he also states: "In a climate of mutual trust, the market is the economic institution that permits encounter between persons, inasmuch as they are economic subjects who make use of contracts to regulate their relations as they exchange goods and services of equivalent value between them, in order to satisfy their needs and desires" (*CV*, 35).

Benedict XVI underlines the importance of reciprocal trust for the working of the market, saying, "[W]ithout internal forms of solidarity and mutual trust, the market cannot completely fulfil its proper economic function," and he complains that it is exactly that trust that has been lost in the economic and financial crisis of 2008–2009 (*CV*, 35).

Political and Social Aspects

The central political problem in *CV* is the regulatory competence of the state. Benedict XVI repeatedly writes about this competence that is a duty attributed to the state for the sake of the public welfare. He discusses the limitations it has experienced by globalization, and he asks for the new forms it must receive in order to regulate this globalization. He rightly praises the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in which Pope Leo XIII in 1891, "somewhat ahead of its time," stated that "the civil order, for its self-regulation, also needs intervention from the state

for purposes of redistribution” (*CV*, 39). At the time of Paul VI, the countries still were relatively autonomous. By the help of their regulation competence they could “determine the priorities of economy” (*CV*, 24). However, globalization has led to restrictions in the state’s sovereignty and in consequence to a loss of competence of governments and parliaments. Then, the great crisis of the years 2008–2009 has revealed the necessity to redefine the role of the state (*CV*, 24).

However, what Benedict XVI offers in order to realize that redefinition of the state’s role in forming globalization raises a series of questions. The statement that the world economic crisis resulted in the fact that the state “regains many of its competences” (*CV*, 41) leaves the concrete consequences open. It also leaves open whether the liberalization of global commercial relationships and the privatization of the state’s services in the last two decades is considered to be useful or detrimental to the public welfare. Does the acquisition of great banks or automotive companies by the states have anything to do with regaining the state’s competences? Hardly. These are fire-brigade measures of several governments that immediately enforce the next question: Why in the United States has General Motors been worthy of that fire-brigade action but Lehman Brothers has not? Pope John XXIII stated the necessary things regarding those state interventions in *Mater et Magistra* (*MM*) in 1961. The state must take care that the private initiatives of the citizens are not only not restricted but also expanded (*MM*, 55), and if the state itself undertakes economic actions in a substitute manner, it must take care to give them as soon as possible into private hands for continuation (*MM*, 152). John Paul II, in *Centesimus Annus*, also has affirmed this “substitute function” of the state with regard to postcommunitic transformation processes but at the same time has emphasized that it must be an exceptional case with time limits because otherwise it would be “to the detriment of both economic and civil freedom” (*CA*, 48).

Must the closer cooperation, enforced by globalization and the worldwide economic crisis that includes newly industrializing and developing countries (*CV*, 41, 42), lead to a world government? Benedict XVI takes up that ancient demand of Catholic social doctrine, previously made by John XXIII (*Pacem in Terris*, 137), Paul VI (*PP*, 78) and by the *Compendium* (441):

To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration: for all this there is urgent need of a true world political authority. (*CV*, 67)

The catalog of tasks given to that world authority already raises a series of questions. For example, there is the question of how to reconcile the control of the world's economy with the market economy, and there are further questions with regard to the structure of that world authority itself. On the one hand, it shall be "true," which means it shall be able to make decisions and to carry out reforms. On the other hand, it shall be "organized in a subsidiary and stratified way" (*CV*, 57). How is that compatible? The principle of subsidiarity, confirmed several times in *CV*, requires the priority of smaller communities over the next higher ones (*Quadragesimo Anno*, 79).¹⁰ With regard to the world authority that means that such an authority must remain in the second rank at the service of the subjects standing at the front—the citizens, the families, the communities, the states, and the connections between states. The strange (and in the Church's social doctrine until now nonexistent) word *stratified* means in my interpretation that the world authority must be subdivided into many decision-making centers. What then remains of a "true world political authority"? In *Deus Caritas Est*, Benedict himself shows a certain distance according to the world authority when he states, "We do not need a State which regulates and controls everything, but a State which, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, generously acknowledges and supports initiatives arising from the different social forces and combines spontaneity with closeness to those in need" (*DCE*, 28). A formulation made by John Paul II in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (*SRS*) is also more suitable in order to meet, on the one hand, the requirement of global regulations and, on the other hand, the principle of subsidiarity. Today, mankind needs "in a new and more difficult phase of its genuine development a greater degree of international ordering, at the service of the societies, economies and cultures of the whole world" (*SRS*, 43).

Benedict's demand to expand the state's competence has another aspect that has great importance especially in the context of developing countries. Together with the tradition of Catholic social doctrine, Benedict demands that "the focus of international aid, within a solidarity-based plan to resolve today's economic problems, should rather be on consolidating constitutional, juridical and administrative systems in countries, that do not fully enjoy these goods" (*CV*, 41). A working constitutional state really is a key to development—a constitutional state that grants human rights, that makes democratic participation possible, and that fights corruption (*CV*, 41). Benedict adopts here the requirement of "good governance" that the African Synod 2009 also has underlined in its final message to God's people and in its *Propositiones* (Number 6; *Propositio*, 24). John Paul II had already underlined in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* the importance

of constitutional, democratic, and corruption-free structures for development. Some developing countries, he wrote,

need to reform certain unjust structures, and in particular their political institutions, in order to replace corrupt, dictatorial and authoritarian forms of government by democratic and participatory ones. This is a process that we hope will spread and grow stronger. For the “health” of a political community—as expressed in the free and responsible participation of all citizens in public affairs, in the rule of law and in respect for and promotion of human rights—is the necessary condition and sure guarantee of the development of “the whole individual and of all people.” (*SRS*, 44)¹¹

Now, more than twenty years later, these words have not lost any of their relevance. In his speech at Westminster Hall on September 17, 2010, Benedict praised the historic contribution of Great Britain to these principles of constitutional democracy.

Observation of the human rights that are based on natural right and form the legitimating basis for any state’s authority, referring not only to developing states but to all states, is Benedict’s demand that has been the focus of Catholic social doctrine since Leo XIII. These rights are sacrosanct. They do not owe their validity to parliamentary majorities but to the “grammar” God has given to the nature of humans (*CV*, 48). Therefore, every political authority has to respect the right of individual and institutional religious freedom (*CV*, 29, 55) as well as marriage and the family, that is, marriage between a man and a woman. “Society cannot freely legislate with regard to the marriage bond”; it has no definite sovereignty over marriage (*Compendium*, 216) that many parliaments and courts of Western countries presume in recent years under the pretext of antidiscrimination. Every legislator has to respect the priority of the married couple concerning the sexual education of their children and has to abstain from political measures of birth control. It has to respect the right to life from conception until natural death. “Openness to life is at the centre of true development” (*CV*, 28). Benedict XVI criticizes the “legislation contrary to life,” which is very widespread in rich, Western countries and has contributed “to the spread of an anti-birth mentality,” which they often try to transfer to other countries as if doing so was cultural progress (*CV*, 28). Very active in that field is the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which tries, with the help of Planned Parenthood, one of the largest abortion providers in the world, to spread this anti-birth mentality all over the world. Michel Schooyans tried in 2001 to unmask that promotion of a culture of death in his book *La face cachée de l’ONU*.¹² Austin Ruse has been working

with the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute in Washington and New York for years to reveal the anti-life activities of the United Nations and their suborganizations. In its final message to God's people and in its *Propositiones*, the African Synod has taken up the critics according to these activities of international organizations and especially condemned Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol that propagates a right to abortion under the cloak of women's reproductive rights (*Propositio*, 20).¹³ Benedict XVI dedicates great attention to that struggle between a culture of death and a culture of life just as John Paul II did before him. As prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he supported John Paul II in that mission for the culture of life—not least in the severe discussions about counseling for pregnant women in need in Germany where the German episcopacy was split.¹⁴

Much More Than a Globalization Encyclical

The real development of the world, the “complete development of man in love and truth,” is not decided on the field of controlling globalization or regulating the financial market. That real development is decided on the field of bioethics is the new aspect of *CV*; here are the *res novae* of this encyclical. The dramatic alternative between a culture of life and a culture of death also changes the agenda of the Church's social doctrine. It must recognize that the ethic of life, more precisely the ethic of life protection, is one of its main tasks. A society that tolerates the disregard of the right to life or even legalizes it cannot have a lasting existence, as we can see in many countries across the world (not only of the West) since the beginning of the 1970s. Thus the defense of the right to life from the beginning until the end of life must be the central consequence for the social doctrine of the Church in its efforts to realize human development. That is a fact that is very difficult for Christian social doctrine in some countries, not least in the German speaking countries.¹⁵ “The Church forcefully maintains this link between life ethics and social ethics,” Benedict quotes *Evangelium Vitae* (*EV*) because the Church knows “that a society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice, and peace but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized” (*CV*, 15). Benedict reminds us of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* by Paul VI, which unfortunately has become a taboo subject even within the Church, and praises it as the first encyclical that has shown that connection (*CV*, 15). He takes up the appeal John Paul II already made at the beginning of his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*: The social doctrine

of the Church especially takes care of persons who do not have a voice. At the end of the nineteenth century these persons were the workers Leo XIII spoke for in *Rerum Novarum*. At the end of the twentieth century, these persons are unborn children (*EV*, 5).

Evangelium Vitae is a central social encyclical, but in the general public it is not perceived in that way. It is considered to be an important encyclical but an encyclical of moral theology, rather than a social one. In the presence of the social and political changes since the 1970s, that is a reduction of its content. It is a social encyclical but is missing in nearly all collections of social encyclicals. Unfortunately, the *Compendium* also ignores it in its short survey “from *Rerum Novarum* to our own day” ending with *Centesimus Annus* (*Compendium* 89–103). The admonition of Benedict to combine the social ethic with the ethic of life protection is woven like a red thread throughout *CV* (15, 28, 44, 51, 74, 75). The matter of respecting life “cannot in any way be detached from questions concerning the development of peoples.” It obliges us “to broaden our concept of poverty and underdevelopment to include questions connected with the acceptance of life, especially in cases where it is impeded in a variety of ways” (*CV*, 28). Benedict points out that “morally responsible openness to life represents a rich social and economic resource,” and that it is “incorrect ... to consider population increase as the primary cause of underdevelopment.” He invites us “to hold up to future generations the beauty of marriage and family, and the fact that these institutions correspond to the deepest needs and dignity of the person.... States are called to enact policies promoting the centrality and the integrity of the family founded on marriage between a man and a woman, the primary vital cell of society” (*CV*, 44). The attitude of distance toward *Humanae Vitae* within the Church that has not been overcome until today has rendered the preparation for marriage and family very difficult.

In the discussion about ecological problems, Benedict XVI again talks about the connection between the social ethic and the ethic of life protection. He criticizes a “new pantheism” in the ecological discussion that considers nature to be more important than the human person (*CV*, 48), and then he states: “If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology” (*CV*, 51). This connection is still absent in proposition 22 of the African Synod. Benedict’s care about the culture of life culminates in dramatic words in paragraphs 74 and 75 of *CV*:

A particularly crucial battleground in today's cultural struggle between the supremacy of technology and human moral responsibility is the field of bioethics, where the very possibility of integral human development is radically called into question. In this most delicate and critical area, the fundamental question asserts itself forcefully: is man the product of his own labours or does he depend on God?... We are presented with a clear either/or. (*CV*, 74)

The social question has become a radically anthropological question, in the sense that it concerns not just how life is conceived but also how it is manipulated.... In vitro fertilization, embryo research, the possibility of manufacturing clones and human hybrids: all this is now emerging and being promoted in today's highly disillusioned culture, which believes it has mastered every mystery, because the origin of life is now within our grasp.... Yet we must not underestimate the disturbing scenarios that threaten our future, or the powerful new instruments that the "culture of death" has at its disposal. To the tragic and widespread scourge of abortion we may well have to add in the future—indeed it is already surreptitiously present—the systematic eugenic programming of births ... [and] a pro-euthanasia mindset. (*CV*, 75)

The bioethical problems resulting from assisted reproduction have been discussed in the *Compendium*—but this discussion exists more on the moral-theological argumentation level of *Donum Vitae*, the instruction given by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith about the respect for the beginning of human life and the dignity of reproduction from March 10, 1987. However, the *Compendium* points out that the methods of assisted reproduction lead to a "total domination over the reproduced individual on the part of the one reproducing it" (*Compendium*, 236). *Dignitas Personae* (*DP*) is still more precise in working out the social and ethical problems of assisted reproduction.¹⁶ It shows that this form of reproduction, especially the genetic therapy controlled by a eugenic mentality, destroys the ontological equity of persons. The one becomes the producer of the other. The reproduction engineers become masters of their creatures. By that, the symmetry of relations in society are destroyed, a fact that has been pointed out from a secular perspective by Jürgen Habermas and Francis Fukuyama.¹⁷ The use of "orphaned" embryos for research, medicine, or pharmacy also leads to the question of whether embryos that do not have any chance to be transferred into a uterus can be treated like the property of reproduction engineers or, to say it in other words, whether they can be considered to be slaves of the twenty-first century. The genetic-technological dreams of optimizing humankind result in the dominance of some over the freedom of many. They are detrimental to the public welfare (*DP*, 27) and endanger the future of democracy. To avoid this "brave new world" (cf. Aldous Huxley) is the challenge of the twenty-first

century that the social doctrine of the Church needs to address. Therefore, apart from the Commission *Justitia et Pax*, the Church is asked to establish pro-life committees in all countries and on all levels. Here, the bishops of the United States have worked in an exemplary manner. The pro-life committees of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and of most of the dioceses have become solid pillars of the pro-life movement.¹⁸

In his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Benedict says that Christians must form social doctrine again and again in order to correct the new developments in society,¹⁹ which gives the “statute of civil right” to the Christian religion in society since the publication of *Rerum Novarum* (*CV*, 56; *CA*, 5). Not least by the social teaching does the faith carry out its correcting function toward reason. The social teaching is “the proclamation of the truth of Christ’s love in society” (*CV*, 5). To refuse the Christian faith that right of being present in the society avoids a true development.

When the Church declares that unconditional respect for the right to life of every innocent person—from conception to natural death—is one of the pillars on which every civil society stands, she wants simply to promote a human state, a state which recognizes the defense of the fundamental rights of the human person, especially of the weakest, as its primary duty. (*EV*, 101)

With *CV*, Benedict XVI has shown the way the social doctrine must take and where it must give its contribution in order to defend a human state.

Notes

- * An earlier version of this article was originally prepared for the conference of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, “*Caritas in Veritate: The Social Doctrine of the Church as a Leaven of Integral Development*,” in Accra, Ghana, September 26, 2010.
1. Globalization has been compared to the tower of Babel, as noted in *The Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church*, 16, no. 3 (August 15, 2000). The *Justitia et Pax* Commission of the French Bishops Conference sees in globalization, in its paper “Maitriser la mondialisation,” in *Document Catholique*, 2201 (Paris: Bayard Press, April 4, 1999), 330–35, the risk of a Babel tower as well as the chance for a new Pentecost, especially if a global strengthening of social democracy avoids “Americanization.” Among Jesuit authors there are also extreme differences in evaluation. See Manfred Spieker, “Die ethischen Herausforderungen der Globalisierung: Orientierungen der Christlichen Gesellschaftslehre,” *Die Neue Ordnung* 55, no. 1 (February 2001): 4–16.

2. *The Social Agenda* published by order of the Papal Council *Justitia et Pax* and edited by Robert A. Sirico and Maciej Zięba in 2000, by which the *Compendium* of social doctrine was prepared, evidences a more rational opinion on globalization (§357).
3. Karl Marx, “Vorrede zur Dissertation,” in *Werke, Ergänzungsband, Teil 1*, ed. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Berlin: Dietz, 1973), 263.
4. Martin Schlag, “Katholische Soziallehre in Kontinuität? Wirtschaftsethische Anmerkungen zu ‘Caritas in Veritate,’” *Die Neue Ordnung*, 64, no. 2 (April 2010): 90.
5. George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of John Paul II* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999). See also his second volume, *The End and the Beginning: Pope John Paul II—The Victory of Freedom, the Last Years, the Legacy* (New York: Doubleday, 2010).
6. See Manfred Spieker, “Development of the Whole Man and of All Men: Guidelines of the Catholic Church for Societal Development,” *Journal of Markets & Morality* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 263–78.
7. See Jacques Maritain, *Humanisme Intégral* (Paris: French & European, 1968).
8. Second Special Assembly for Africa, “Message to the People of God of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops,” October 23, 2009, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20091023_message-synod_en.html.
9. Stefano Zamagni, “Reciprocity, Civil Economy, Common Good,” in *Pursuing the Common Good: How Solidarity and Subsidiarity Can Work Together: Proceedings of the 14th Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences* (Vatican City: Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, 2008), 467–503. See also Martin Schlag, “Katholische Soziallehre in Kontinuität?,” 84, which refers to further publications by Zamagni.
10. Against the proposition of a fiscal subsidiarity (*CV*, 60), it must be objected that it contradicts the budget sovereignty that is important for every democratic parliament and that it opens the doors for populism that is not useful for every foreign aid recipient.
11. At a symposium about *SRS* 1989 in Benin at the time of the Agonie of the Marxist military dictatorship of President Kérékou, nothing was discussed as intensively and affirmatively as Number 44 of *SRS*. I had the impression that John Paul II had touched the heart of many persons in Africa by that statement.
12. Michel Schooyans, *La face cachée de l’ONU* (Paris: Le Sarment: Fayard, 2000).

13. Second Special Assembly for Africa, “Final List of Propositions,” October 23, 2009, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20091023_elenco-prop-finali_en.html.
14. Manfred Spieker, *Kirche und Abtreibung in Deutschland: Ursache und Verlaufe eines Konfliktes* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schoeningh, 2008).
15. See Manfred Spieker, *Der verleugnete Rechtsstaat. Anmerkungen zur Kultur des Todes in Europa*, exp. ed. (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schoeningh, 2011), 223–51.
16. *Dignitas Personae* (September 8, 2008), which follows the principles of *Donum Vitae*, is a response from the CDF to further questions on bioethics.
17. Jürgen Habermas, *Die Zukunft der menschlichen Natur* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001); Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002).
18. Manfred Spieker, “Katholische Kirche und Pro-Life-Bewegung in den USA,” *Zeitschrift für Lebensrecht* 15 (2006): 110.
19. Joseph Ratzinger/Benedikt XVI, *Jesus von Nazareth* (Freiburg: Herder, 2007), 160.